

## Missionary

### THE PROMINENCE OF MISSIONS IN THE BIBLE.

By Miss Elizabeth Alexander.

The germ of missions was embedded in the soil of the Old Testament dispensation, but it is to the genial atmosphere of the Christian era that we are indebted for its development into a great tree that is today bearing leaves for the healing of the nations.

God created man in His own image and placed him in a garden in which the Creator himself was pleased to walk "in the cool of the day"; but sin entered and this image was marred and man fell from his high estate, for "the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden"—forth from His presence; and, alas! all mankind by Adam's fall lost communion with God.

But God never makes a failure; even before "man so divinely made by sin unmade himself," God's great loving heart had planned a way of escape, and in man's direct need uttered the vague, but firm, promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." This vague promise was after many ages concentrated upon a single family, that of Abraham, destined to become a great nation; then confined to the seed of Israel, a descendant of Abraham; then to the dynasty of David, then to a Prince—the Prince of Peace.

The purpose of all God's dealings with man has been to restore him to communion with God the Father through Christ the Son.

The Jewish Church with its sacrifices, its types, its prophecy, existed that the Messiah might be revealed; consequently the idea of the Messianic kingdom grew with the growth of the temporal kingdom. Isaiah spoke in no uncertain terms to those who had faith to hear, and Malachi spoke plainly and definitely of the Messiah and his forerunner: "Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple."

Then for four centuries the voice of prophecy was still and the chosen of God were scattered; but while the temporal kingdom crumbled, the idea of the Messianic kingdom grew more distinct. Then the silence of the centuries was broken by the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Then the same voice cried, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"; for the long-expected Messiah had come and was entering upon his stupendous task of restoring man to communion with God the Father and his fellowmen; and this voice echoes down the centuries, "Behold the Lamb of God!" for Christ is the monumental figure of the ages; who, while exalted to the right hand of God, yet condescends to dwell in the hearts of men—to share his divinity with fallen man that the image so marred may be restored.

Thus Christ came from his seclusion in Nazareth after thirty years of silence and obscurity and entered upon his ministry—a ministry of three short years,

but so full of good works that John closes his record by saying: "And there are many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Dr. Abbott says. "He came to establish a kingdom, to substitute hope in the hearts of men for dull despair, and love for selfishness, and faith for sensuousness. But this kingdom could not be made, it must grow; so he gathered around him a few choice spirits to instruct and to train to carry on the work of establishing the Kingdom of God in the world, and when he died he left it as an heritage to those who should follow after him, to all those who have the vision to see the beauty of such a kingdom and the desire to accomplish it, and the heroism to undertake its accomplishment."

The geographical bounds of his activity was Palestine, a country about one-third the size of South Carolina, and he plainly declared to the Syro-phoenician that his work was confined to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel," and though his final commission to his disciples was, "Go teach all nations," yet he told them that they should begin at Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. For he knew the need of definiteness in the execution of a plan that must finally affect the whole world. The seed must be not only planted; but it must be tended and have time to grow; and so far as we know some of these disciples never left Jerusalem.

Christ emptied himself of his glory and came down and lived as a man among men, not as men lived, but as men ought to live—"Left Heaven for earth and for all the limitations and sufferings and shame of earth, as the divine missionary to lost humanity, and if we have in us the mind and the love that were in him, the aim of our lives too will be missionary," and we will be willing to lay aside our pride and Pharisaical exclusiveness and will study with humility and meekness the needs of men, realizing that "the ground principle of missions is unfeigned sympathy for simple manhood in its homeliest joys and sorrows," that there must be Christian fellowship with those we would win for Christ; for evangelization means not simply heralding a message—which were quickly done—but living a life; not simply spending our means, but ourselves.

Hear again the Great Commission given, just before He went away, to his disciples, who were to continue his work in the world: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world."

Oh, the magnitude of it! as broad as the world, as long as time, as deep as truth.

Christianity is peculiarly fitted to become the world religion, complete, perfect, sanctifying the intellect, the feelings, and the will—the only reconstructing agency of our wrecked being.

Lander College, Greenwood, S. C.

(To be Continued.)